

# **ST THOMAS À BECKET CHURCH**

## **FRAMFIELD, BLACKBOYS, AND PALEHOUSE COMMON**



## **PARISH PROFILE**

**August 2022**

# ST THOMAS À BECKET CHURCH, FRAMFIELD

## PARISH PROFILE: AUGUST 2022

### SECTION 1: SUMMARY OF THE PROFILE

We are a friendly and welcoming rural parish in the heart of East Sussex. The church building is the parish church for Framfield, Blackboys and the hamlet of Palehouse Common.

### SECTION 2: THE BROADER CONTEXT

Framfield is an excellent place to build a ministry, which needs to diversify into younger age groups. Two Church schools (governed by a single Foundation) provide a firm steppingstone towards this goal.

- The building is in good condition, following restoration in 2013
- There are excellent audio/visual presentation facilities
- There is a modern sound system approaching broadcast quality.
- The organ is in fine condition and very comprehensive for the size of church
- Varied musical tastes are catered for, therefore services have a broad musical base.

Come in and see what we are about:



*North doors and porch*

### **SECTION 3: THE VICAR WE NEED - THE KIND OF PERSON TO LEAD ST THOMAS À BECKET CHURCH**

1. The PCC is unanimous in its opinion that re-building our young people's work, both with younger children and teenagers, is vital. A new vicar would re-establish stronger links with the schools, building on the valuable work that is already being done, but giving the vicar a much higher profile.
2. He/she should be a good communicator with a light, welcoming approach and sense of humour, able to relate to all ages.
3. We need a strong person, who is able to use the gifts of others but who will lead from the front.
4. Involvement in village, as well as parish, life is important, and we would expect visiting to take place generally and not only at times of sickness or pastoral need.
5. He/she should be able to help individuals come to faith in Christ and closely follow up newcomers who are searching for faith.
6. An understanding of the present situation in the parish would be needed before any working towards a long-term vision for the future.
7. An acceptance of all genres of musical worship. We offer both traditional organ music and a worship group with piano and guitar, and vocals. We assemble a traditional Christmas choir for the annual Lessons and Carols.
8. We would welcome teaching to build up the Body of Believers in sermons, such as series of sermons on a particular theme or book of the Bible.
9. The person should be open to a variety of styles of worship, meeting the needs of those who prefer a traditional style as well those who would wish to allow flexibility for the movement of the Holy Spirit in different services.
10. It would be preferable for the rest day(s) to be on one designated day each week.
11. It goes without saying that both the person and those responsible for any appointment would undertake to seek God's guidance earnestly in prayer.

## SECTION 4: ABOUT THE PARISH

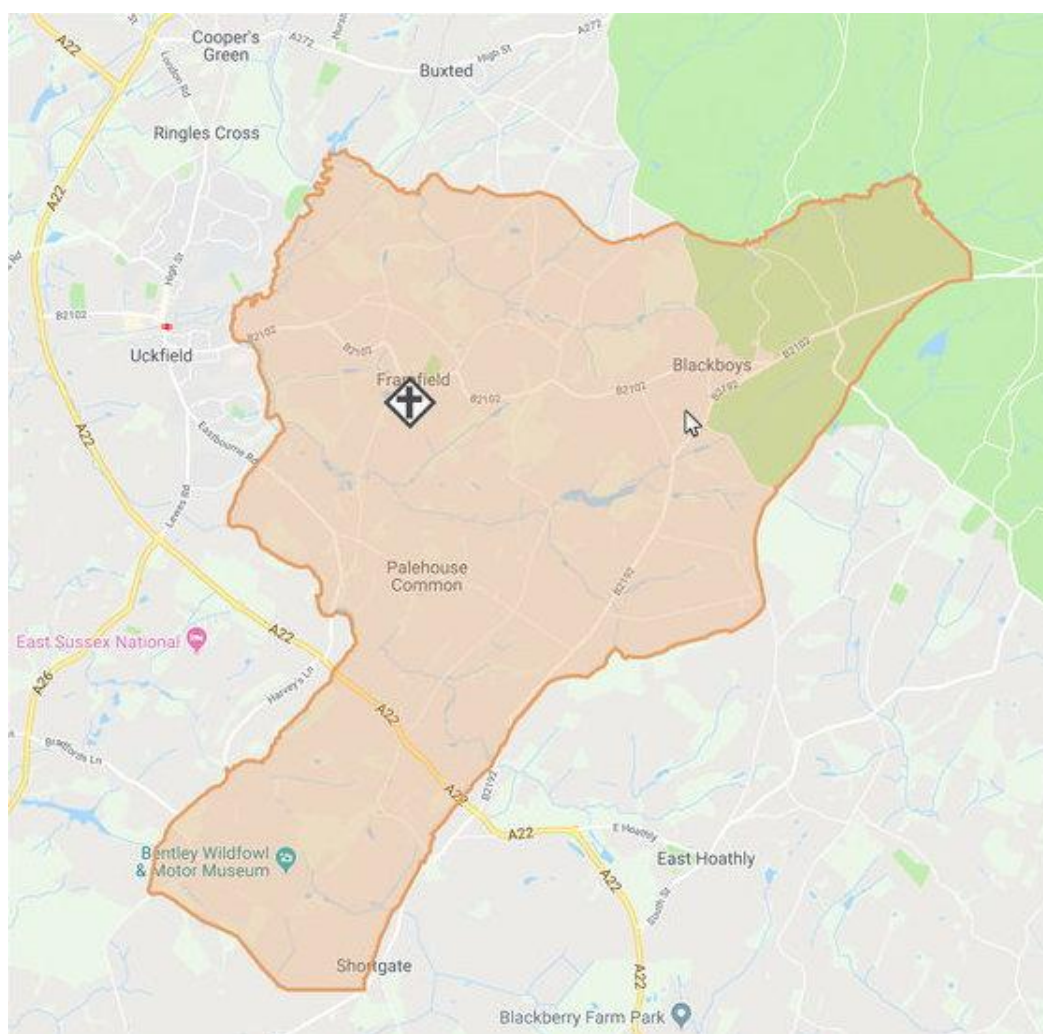
### THE PARISH

Framfield is a beautiful, rural parish extending over a fairly large area and including within it the villages of Framfield, Blackboys and the hamlet of Palehouse Common. There are about 1100 houses, including farms, country houses and some new estates, with a total population of around 2100. (Actually 2103 as in the 2021 census)

### VILLAGE SCHOOLS

There are two C.E. Aided Primary Schools within the Parish: one in Framfield (90-100 pupils), the other in Blackboys (130-140 pupils), giving a total of around 230. In September 2012 the two schools were brought together into the St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation with a single governing body. Church members serve as Foundation governors on the governing body. The incumbent is an ex-officio governor.

Church members currently lead assemblies at the village schools on a fortnightly basis and the schools hold their Harvest and Christmas services in the church. This year young musicians from both schools led the worship at our Mothering Sunday and Fathers' Day services.



*Parish Map (taken from the A Church Near You website)*

## SECTION 5: ABOUT THE CHURCH - FABRIC

**THE CHURCH** –There has been a church on this site for at least 800 years. The present building (set in a churchyard of approximately two acres) is around 500 years old and seats about 250 people. The church is a Grade IIB Listed Building.

The building is generally in good condition, with the 2015 quinquennial inspection identifying manageable items for attention. At this time, we took the opportunity to carry out major restoration works to the church building internally and externally. This also included changes to the north and south aisles to create a special children's and event areas. New lighting and electrical supply now meet the latest standards.



*The Children's Area*

The church is fortunate in having a Friends organisation which, through various money-raising activities, has helped to support the ongoing work of maintaining the church building.

**THE CHURCH HALL**, built in 1975, is situated adjacent to the church. The hall is used extensively by church members and is also let out to non-church users. The hall is compliant with the access requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Recent works have included reroofing, rewiring, kitchen refurbishment and redecoration.

**THE CHURCH OFFICE** is in a listed barn belonging to the vicarage and is situated to the south side of the church.

**THE VICARAGE** is a four-bedroomed family house, lying to the south side of the church. Built in 1958, it has a large garden and beautiful views over the surrounding countryside.

### **CHURCH INFORMATION**

There are currently 78 members on the electoral roll of whom approximately one third live outside the parish. The attendance at the main morning service ranges between 35 at a service of Holy Communion to over 50 at the Family Services. On special occasions, such as our Christmas, Easter Day, Mothering Sunday and Fathers' Day services, numbers have risen to over 100, including a large number of children. There is currently no evening service held. The Sunday school is not running at present but with the large number of children in the villages there is great potential for growth in this direction. Currently there is no crèche facility nor activities for mothers and toddlers, but this is a situation the PCC hopes to address in the future.

### **CHURCHMANSHIP**

We are an Evangelical Church (open to the movement of the Holy Spirit), offering a variety of styles of worship which the PCC hopes meet the needs of the community the Church seeks to serve.

### **SUNDAY SERVICES**

The morning services are held at 10.00am.

### **MAIN PATTERN OF SERVICES**

#### **Morning – 10.00 am**

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	Holy Communion (CW)	Organ
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	Family Service	Worship Group
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	Holy Communion (CW)	Organ
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	Morning Praise	Worship Group
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	Morning Praise	Worship Group

#### **Evening**

This service has not been reintroduced since Covid, Also, due to the interregnum, this service is currently suspended.

Hymns and songs are taken mainly from Songs of Fellowship and the Church uses the NIV Bible. Lay people are encouraged to take an active part in the services by lesson reading and leading the intercessions.

Members of the Prayer Ministry team are available at the end of each service to pray with any in need. This team is supplemented by other Church members who offer 'prayer chain' support when requested at any time during the week. An area is set aside as a Prayer Corner at the rear of the Church.



*The Prayer Corner at the rear of the church*

## **MUSIC**

There is a fine well-maintained organ which originated in 1900 as a gift from the Baxendale family. It is a two manual instrument with 22 stops. It is important to keep this instrument in use.



*The organ dates from 1900 as was gifted by the Baxendale family*

An electric piano is available for worship group use (and for other modern songs). A small worship group which provides for more modern style songs (this only restarted in July 2022 following easing of Covid restrictions).



*Setting up for the Worship Group is a team effort.*

We have a comprehensive sound system which has recently been upgraded to allow us to stream services online weekly. This has been made possible by a gift donation of the necessary equipment. The system is broadcast quality. A projection screen is available, which has been sympathetically installed to retract out of sight behind the chancel arch when not required. Therefore, it does not spoil the original ancient lines of the building.



*The projection screen in use*

## **THE CHURCHYARD**

Framfield Church is blessed with a wonderful churchyard, covering just over 2 acres (0.8 hectares). The principal parts of the present church building were constructed between 1200 and 1250, and most of the churchyard has clearly been used as a burial site for several centuries (though there are records of an extension in about 1890). Being protected from any kind of development (past, present and future), churchyards like that at Framfield have been able to steadily develop their biodiversity resources in harmony with their original purpose for burial.

For the last 15 years a Churchyard Management Plan has been implemented by a band of enthusiastic volunteers, composed of church members and others. This Plan, based on an ecological survey in 2007, identifies which areas are to be managed as conservation areas and mown only 2 or 3 times a year, and those areas primarily managed for amenity and mown much more regularly.



*The west edge of the Churchyard – Capability Brown’s “Natural Garden”?*

## **SPECIAL SERVICES**

An annual Rogation service and a Harvest Festival are held in Church.

Framfield and Blackboys Horticultural Society holds its annual show on a Saturday in August on Framfield recreation ground. For several years we have held an informal outreach service in a showground marquee on the following day and this is steadily gathering support, we hope to continue this now Covid restrictions are eased,

There are also Mothering Sunday and Fathers’ Day services to which the village schools are invited (see under Village schools above) and a range of Christmas services including very well-attended Crib and Christingle services. A choir is normally assembled for the annual Lessons and Carols service.

## **ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANCE**

NOTE: The present incumbent was also the Church Administrator and worked four days per week (closed Wednesdays) in the Church office. We are

considering the appointment of a Parish Administrator to replace this role, but funds are limited, and we are still at the advertising stage.

### **HOUSE GROUPS**

The Church has three Home Groups that meet on Zoom on a weekly basis for Bible study and fellowship. These groups are well attended and represent a good cross-section of the Church membership.

### **ALPHA COURSE**

Over the past few years, the Church has run several Alpha courses. There are none running at present.

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Social activities are an important part of Church life: they do much to unite the church family and also provide good outreach opportunities. Harvest lunch is well supported (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in October).

### **CHURCH MANAGEMENT**

The PCC currently meets six times a year and is normally supported by sub-committees. Extra meetings of the PCC can be called as required.

The PCC comprises:

- 7 Ordinary Members (including the PCC Secretary and Treasurer)
- 1 Deanery Synod Representative
- 1 Church Warden (The Warden is the Vice Chairman of the PCC)

A system of a maximum three-year term for PCC members is in operation with three members retiring, by rotation, at the APCM each year.

### **FINANCE**

We are very fortunate to have a congregation of generous givers. In recent years we have steered away from envelope giving and encouraged more regular monthly giving via standing order. We currently have regular monthly donations from 35 donators. Donations are also encouraged during church services and members of the parish are very generous during special appeals.

Monthly income and outgoings usually leave us in a 'break even' position each month. However, this has meant that, so far, we have been unable to pay our full Parish Share Contribution. We are trying to address this as best we can. This does allow the opportunity for anyone taking on the position, to suggest a fresh approach to fund raising within the church to help improve the financial position.

### **AWAY GIVING**

Regrettably as an economy measure the PCC currently has no allocation to 'outward giving'.

### **THE 'FRIENDS OF FRAMFIELD CHURCH'**

The 'Friends' was formed nearly twenty-two years ago, and its members work tirelessly to raise money towards the repair and maintenance of the fabric of the church building. From its inception it has contributed over £100,000

towards this ongoing work, which has included repairs to the church roof, recasting of the two bells and a substantial restoration in 2013.



*The restoration of 2013 has given the church a bright and airy feel*



*The Church in action – projector in use*

## **WEBSITE**

The church has a comprehensive website [www.framfieldchurch.org.uk](http://www.framfieldchurch.org.uk) which has been in use since 2003 and has been through various updates. It is maintained and constantly updated by our organist who worked in IT for over 35 years until recently. We also on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Our previous services are available as video recordings in the online archive. We have a page on A Church Near You.

## **PARISH MAGAZINE**

This goes out to around 1100 households on a bi-monthly basis and is a joint venture with Framfield Parish Council. It is compiled by our Organist in cooperation with the Parish Clerk. The incumbent provides a church message, and the details of upcoming services are included. A record of Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals is included. A team of people distribute a free bi-monthly Parish Newsletter to every home in the Parish. Previous issues are archived at:

<https://www.framfieldcouncil.org.uk/magazine/magazine.html>

## **CHURCHES OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS IN THE PARISH**

Baptist – Newlife meets every Sunday at Blackboys C E Primary School.  
Strict Baptist – Hope Chapel (located on the Blackboys – Halland Road)  
There is currently only limited contact with the Newlife Church, and none at all with Hope Chapel.

## **BELL RINGING**

We are only blessed with one bell, which tolls quite nicely, but there is no possibility of expansion.

## **FLOWER ROTA**

Provision of flowers has good support from the village, with 17 members currently on the rota. New members are always welcome.



*Leaving by the west door*

**Thank you for reading our parish profile.**